

GLOTTIS GLOTTOIDES.

Australian Greenshank.

Totanus Glottoïdes, Vig. in Proc. of Comm. Sci. and Corr. of Zool. Soc., Part I. p. 173.—Gould, Century of Birds, pl. 76.

THIS widely wandering species inhabits every country of the Old World from India to the most southern part of Australia. Although nowhere very abundant, it is so generally dispersed over Australia and Van Diemen's Land, that I have seen specimens from every settlement in that vast territory, or as it has with justice been termed, fifth portion of the globe; but although its distribution is so general, its presence is not, I believe, to be depended upon in any given locality; it is in fact a chance but not unfrequent visitor to all. A more elegant bird on the sands can scarcely be imagined, and it is as graceful in all its actions as it is in form, tripping over the beach with a lightness and ease peculiar to itself. It sometimes leaves the sea-side for estuaries and inland lakes; but these localities are not so favourable to its habits as sandy points and spits of land on the sea-shore, where it is frequently seen in company with the Whimbrel, Curlew and Oyster-catcher.

I have not been able to discover its breeding-place, nor have I succeeded in procuring its eggs either from Australia or any other country.

It is sometimes seen in small flocks, of from seven to ten in number, but more frequently in pairs.

Like many other members of the family to which it belongs, this bird is subject to considerable change in its plumage, being much darker and more blotched and spotted during the breeding-season than at any other.

Face, all the under surface, rump and tail pure white; the sides of the breast streaked with dark brown, and the tail barred on the margins, and freckled with dark blackish brown; crown of the head and back of the neck grey, streaked down the centre with dark brown; shoulders and primaries very dark brown, the outer quill with a pure white shaft; the remainder of the upper surface light brown, each feather margined with grey, with a streak of dark brown down the centre, and a series of oblong spots on the margins of the same hue; bill dark olive; irides black; feet and legs deep olive-green.

The above is the description of the plumage of summer; in winter the colouring is similar, but much paler.

The Plate represents three specimens in different states of plumage, rather less than the natural size.